Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A method for increasing the proliferation of thymocytes in a non-human animal comprising altering an endogenous gene encoding $p27^{Kip1}$ in a ~~somatic~~ thymocyte, or a multipotent cell that differentiates into a thymocyte, of the animal to cause a functional deficiency of cyclin-dependent kinase inhibitor function of $p27^{Kip1}$, thereby increasing the proliferation of thymocytes in the animal.

2. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the multipotent cell is a ~~thymocyte or~~ bone marrow cell.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the animal is a rodent, pig, sheep, frog, or bovine.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the gene encoding $p27^{Kip1}$ is altered by insertion of a positively selectable marker, mutation of the gene encoding $p27^{Kip1}$, or deletion of the gene encoding $p27^{Kip1}$.

5. (Original) The method of claim 4, wherein the gene encoding $p27^{Kip1}$ is altered by insertion of a positively selectable marker into the gene.

6. (Original) The method of claim 5, wherein the positively selectable marker encodes neomycin resistance, thymidine kinase, adenine phosphoribosyl transferase, hypoxanthine-guanine phosphoribosyl transferase or dihydrofolate reductase.

7. (Original) The method of claim 6, wherein the positively selectable marker encodes neomycin resistance.

8. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

introducing a plasmid into the cell, wherein the plasmid comprises the gene encoding $p27^{Kip1}$ altered by insertion of a positively selectable marker.

9. (Currently amended) The method of claim 8, wherein the plasmid further comprises a negatively selectable marker adjacent the altered gene encoding $p27^{Kip1}$, whereby the distance between the negatively selectable marker and the altered gene encoding $p27^{Kip1}$ is sufficient to allow homologous recombination between the altered gene encoding $p27^{Kip1}$ and [[a]] the endogenous gene encoding $p27^{Kip1}$ in the cell.

10. (Original) The method of claim 9, wherein the negatively selectable marker encodes thymidine kinase.

11. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein the plasmid is delivered to the cell by electroporation, microinjection or transformation.